

***For Immediate Release***

**HOUSTON TEACHERS HONORED WITH THE KINDER EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD AND  
A COLLECTIVE \$240,000 IN GRANTS**

HOUSTON – October 1, 2015 – Twelve (12) school teachers were honored recently with the Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award receiving a collective total of \$240,000 from the [Kinder Foundation](#). Five teachers each from KIPP Houston Public Schools and YES Prep Public Schools, and two teachers from the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston received grants of \$20,000 each. Five of these decorated teachers are also Teach for America alumni.

The Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award was established in honor of Edna C. Kinder, who taught special education students in Cape Girardeau, MO. Her son, Rich Kinder, co-founder and executive chairman of Kinder Morgan, and his wife Nancy, created the awards to recognize innovative and results-oriented teaching and to raise public awareness of the importance of effective and committed teachers.

**2015 Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award Winners:**

- **Anthony Nguyen:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, KIPP Liberation College Preparatory, Teach For America 2012 alumnus
- **Fabeah Adu-Oppong:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Blended Learning, KIPP Sharpstown College Prep, Teach For America 2011 alumna
- **Mayra Gonzalez:** Kindergarten, KIPP Explore Academy
- **Kelly Pfister:** 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Geometry, KIPP Houston High School
- **Kacie Cooper:** AP Statistics and AP Calculus, YES Prep Southeast, Teach For America 2008 alumna
- **Marissa Blakley:** AP Calculus, YES Prep East End
- **Anna Rangel:** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, YES Prep Northbrook Middle School
- **Lauren Needham:** AP Environmental Science and Environmental Systems, YES Prep Southwest
- **Crystal Visperas:** 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Level Chair & English II Teacher, Teach For America 2007 alumna, YES Prep Gulfton
- **Andre Haughton:** US History, Teach For America 2010 alumnus, KIPP Courage College Prep
- **Megan Cebrynski:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Our Lady of Guadalupe School
- **Douglas Vranderic:** High School Math, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School

“The success or failure of building Houston into a leading, global city over the next generation is linked to the investment we make in our teachers and children today,” said Rich Kinder, chairman of the Kinder Foundation. “I commend the award winners for inspiring their students and setting a high bar of educational excellence.”

**About the Kinder Foundation**

The Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban green space, education, and quality of life. More at [kinderfoundation.org](http://kinderfoundation.org).

**About KIPP Houston Public Schools**

KIPP was founded in Houston in 1994 and has since grown to 183 public schools in 20 states and DC serving 70,000 children. Houston is KIPP's largest region, with 24 public schools serving nearly 12,500 students and an additional 1,000 alumni in college and beyond. While only eight percent of students from low-income communities across the nation graduate from college, KIPPsters boast a 51 percent college graduation rate, tracking from the 8th grade. [www.kipp-houston.org](http://www.kipp-houston.org)

**About YES Prep Public Schools**

Since 1998, YES Prep Public Schools has grown from an entrepreneurial start-up to a proven national leader with 15 Houston based campuses strategically placed in underserved communities impacting over 10,500 children. Where only 1 out of 10 students in low-income communities will earn a college degree, YES Prep's vision is to create a city where every child has access to a high-performing public school and go on to persist to and through college. They have consistently delivered excellent results with 100% of YES Prep graduates being accepted into college and 80% of alumni returning back to Houston thereby adding significant value to the Houston economy. With a waitlist of over 6,000 students YES Prep's work is far from over.

**About Teach For America - Houston**

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today, over 270 corps members are teaching across 5 school districts in Houston, as more than 1,400 alumni are working across different sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education in our city. This year Teach For America - Houston is celebrating 25 years of work with the Houston community. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**About Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston**

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston call young people to holiness and prepare them to live and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In collaboration with families, Archdiocesan Catholic schools teach the values of faith and tradition, serve the community, and ensure academic excellence. Catholic schools are committed to the evangelizing mission of the Church to educate and form witnesses who transform the world.

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Catholic Schools make up the largest private school system in Texas. There are currently 61 schools throughout the Archdiocese, with more than 19,000 students enrolled. The schools serve students PreK-3 through 12th grade and all schools offer need-based tuition assistance for students. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston serves 1.6 million Catholics in 10 counties. It is the largest Roman Catholic diocese in Texas and the 12th largest in the United States. [www.Choosecatholicchools.org](http://www.Choosecatholicchools.org).

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